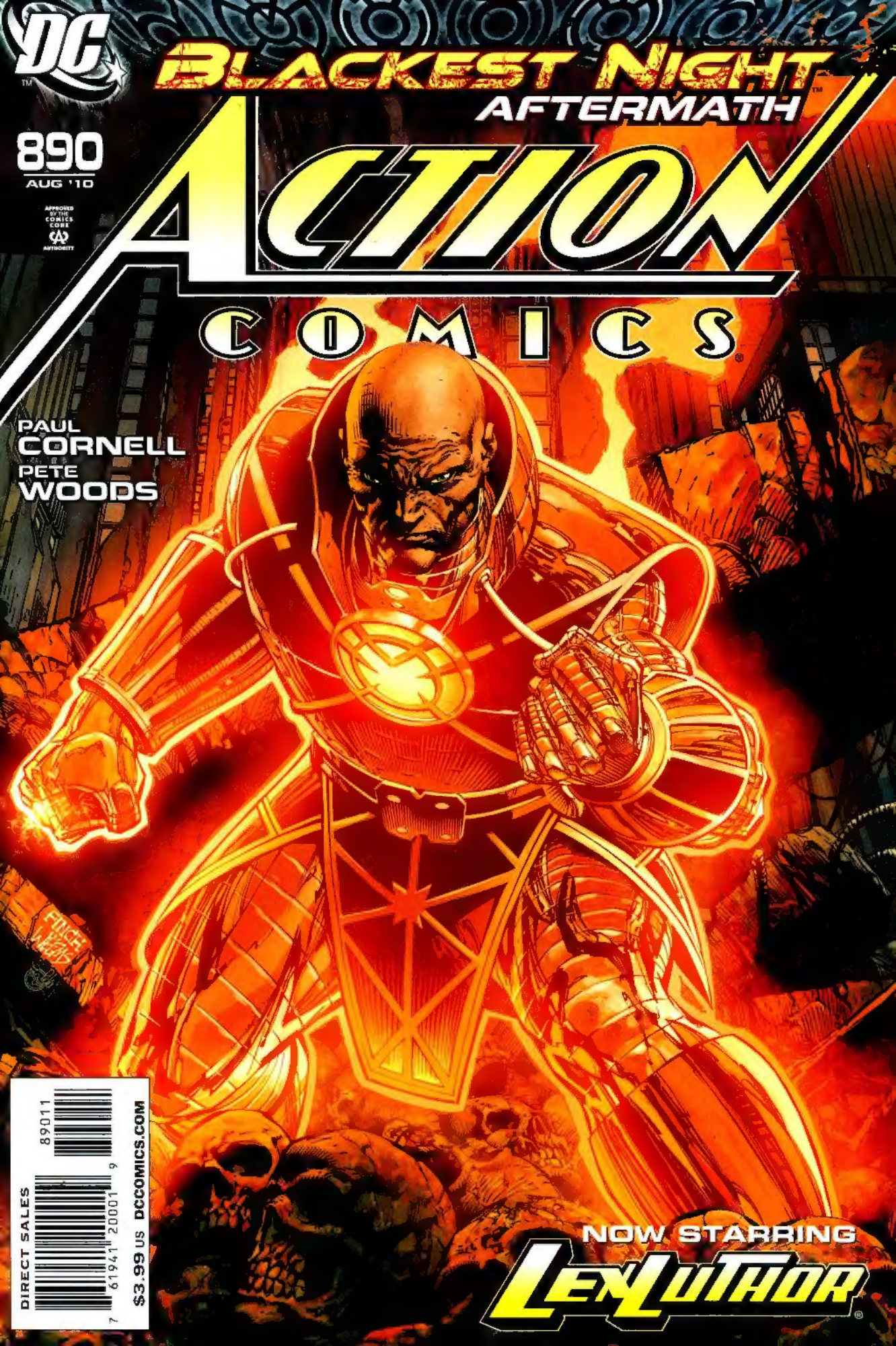
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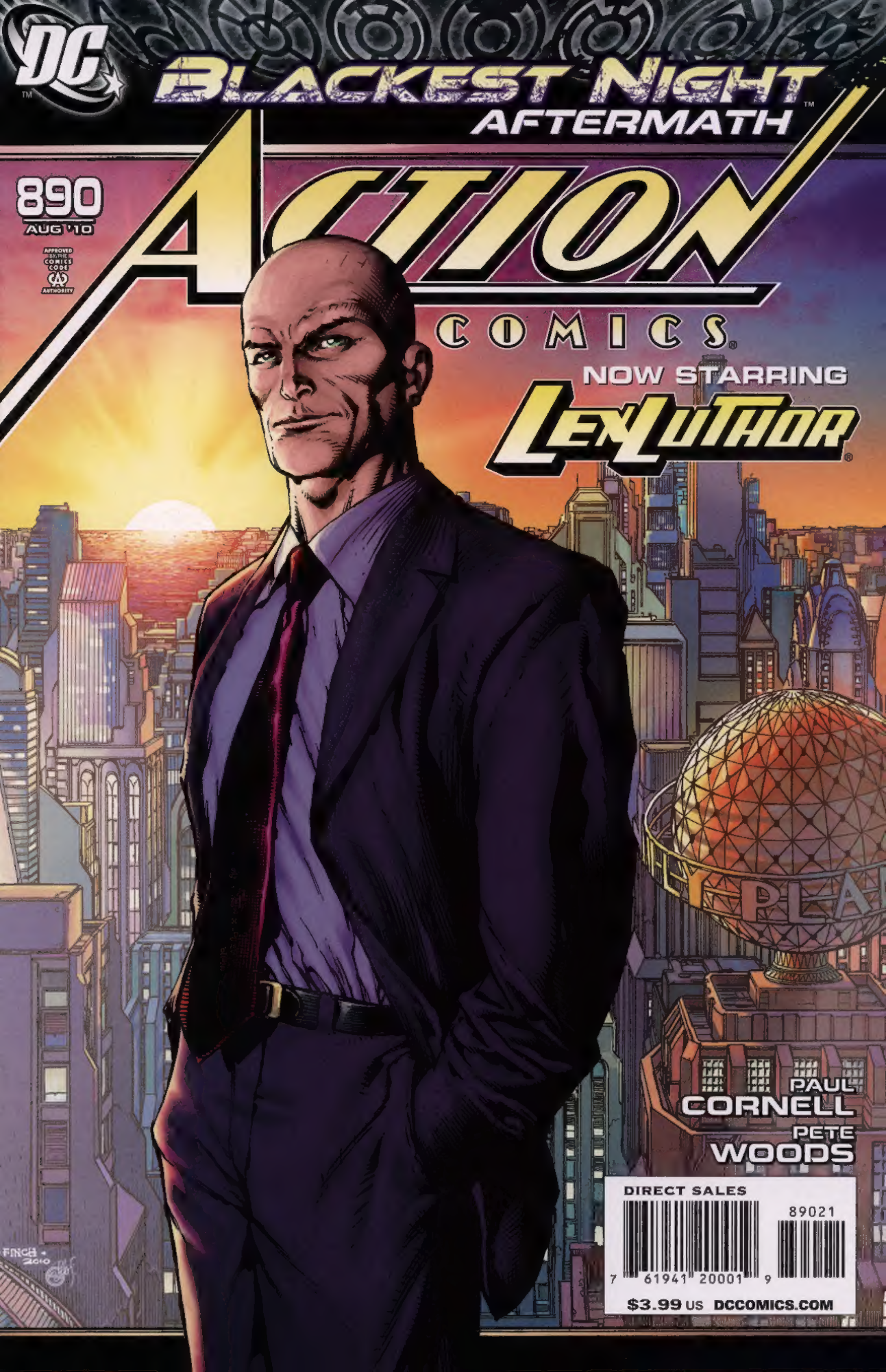
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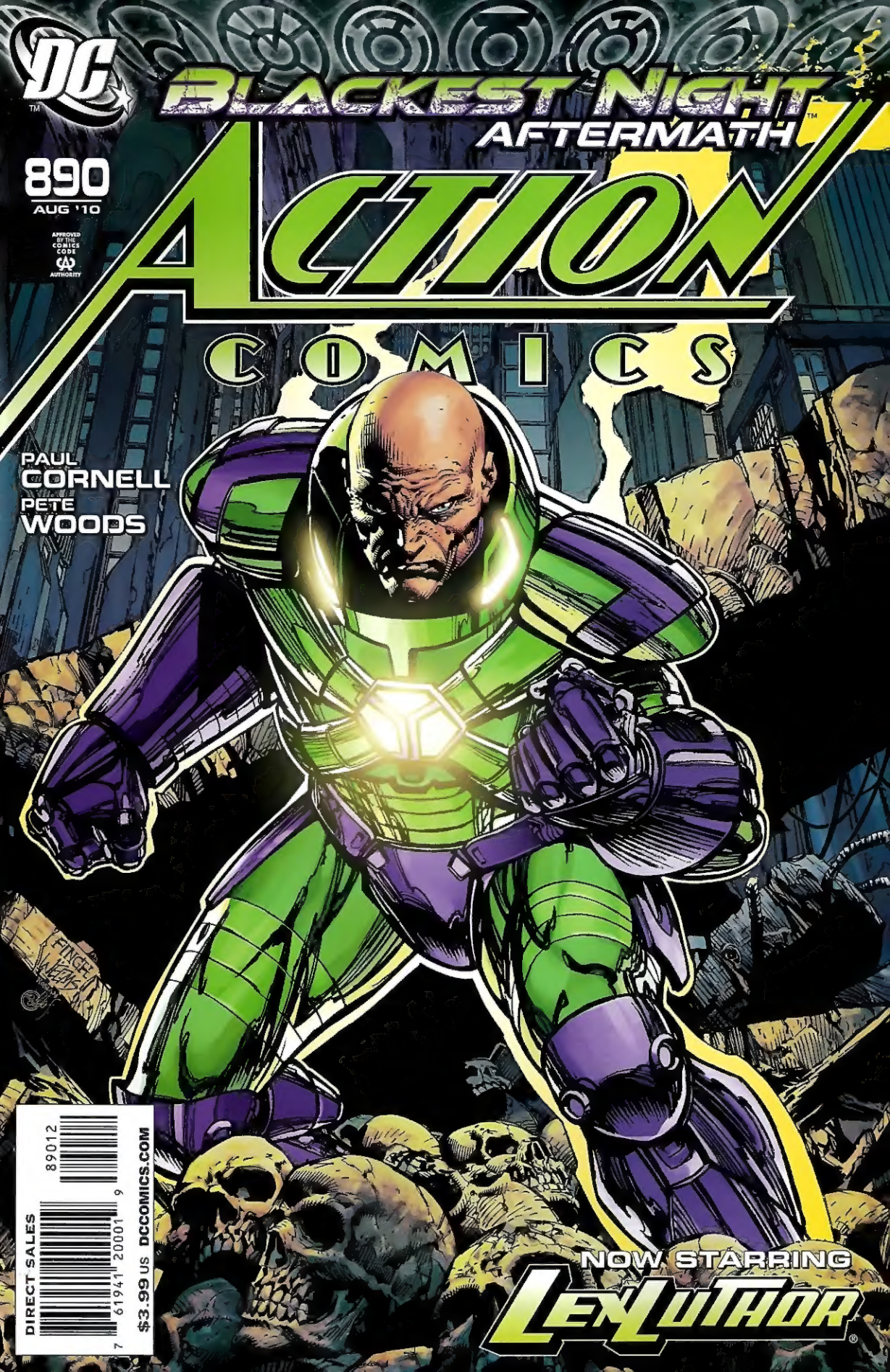
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DC COMICS PRESENTS, with pardonable pride, the new creative team of
PAUL CORNELL: writer · PETE WOODS: artist
BRAD ANDERSON: colorist · ROB LEIGH: letterer
DAVID FINCH, JOE WEEMS & PETER STEIGERWALD: cover · FINCH & STEIGERWALD: variant cover
who in turn (presumably) PROUDLY PRESENT

LEX LUTHOR: THE

THE BLACK RING

PART ONE

QUESTION: WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

BORN IN SMALLVILLE, BUT BELIEVING HIMSELF SUPERIOR, HE MURDERED HIS FATHER TO ESCAPE SMALL-TOWN AMERICA, AND BUILT AN EMPIRE ON HIS GENIUS. THE SWORN ENEMY OF SUPERMAN, HE HAS VOWED THAT THE WORLD WILL TURN ITS BACK ON THE MAN OF STEEL, AND INSTEAD EMBRACE HUMANITY'S CHAMPION... AND FUTURE RULER...

LEX LUTHOR

WIL MOSS: asst. editor
MATT IDELSON: editor
SUPERMAN created by
JERRY SIEGEL &
JOE SHUSTER

WHAT AM I DOING?
I'M MEDITATING.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
STATEMENT: IF WE LET YOU GO FROM HERE--
--SUPERMAN HAS LEFT METROPOLIS.
HE CAN'T SAVE YOU.
Heh.
AS IF I REQUIRE HIS HELP.
LISTEN.
YOU HAVEN'T ASKED FOR A RANSOM.
YOU HAVEN'T INTERROGATED ME.
THIS IS THE FIRST THING YOU'VE SAID TO ME: SCARING THEN KILLING ME ISN'T THE GAME.
SO--
--YOU'RE UP TO SOMETHING ELSE.
I CAN'T WAIT TO FIND OUT WHAT.
STATEMENT: YOU...YOU MUST THINK ABOUT YOUR SITUATION!
OH, I AM.
I'M THINKING ABOUT HOW I GOT HERE.

"I'M THINKING ABOUT THE EVENTS OF A WEEK AGO..."
SO ALL WE'D HAVE TO DO TO INCREASE THE SENSOR'S RANGE--
AND THE POWER.
NO--
I NEED RANGE AND POWER TO FIND THE LANTERN RINGS.
NO, BECAUSE--
DON'T KEEP SAYING THAT WORD.
NO, LISTEN--
MR. LUTHOR, YOU CAN'T HAVE THE POWER.
YOU CAN'T HAVE--
SPALDING--
HAVE THAT MAN FIRED.
!
WITH REFERENCES AND RUMORS SO HE NEVER WORKS IN THIS BUSINESS AGAIN.

"I DO THINK HE OVERREACTED..."
--KILL YOU, YOU SON OF--!
WHO
GET HIM AWAY FROM--!
--A FAMILY TO FEED! HE DOESN'T KNOW--!

"EVEN BY YESTERDAY, THE WOUND HADN'T COMPLETELY HEALED."
YOU COULD CONCEAL THAT
YOU COULD USE SOME FOUNDATION.
I COULD SHOW YOU HOW TO BLEND IT IN.
GO ON. HAVE AN ADVENTURE OUTSIDE YOUR SKILL SET.
I DON'T KNOW, LOIS.
THE BRUISE REPRESENTS A REAL EXPERIENCE.
A REAL DISTURBING EXPERIENCE.
SOME THINGS YOU GOTTA KEEP UNDER WRAPS.

I CAN EAT ANYTIME.
LOIS, WOULD YOU CARE TO JOIN ME?
I HAVE TO DO THIS.
YES, MR. LUTHOR?
AH, SASKY. I'M GLAD IT'S YOU ON SHIFT.
I'VE MADE UP MY MIND ABOUT THE FORMER EMPLOYEE WHO ASSAULTED ME.
WOULD YOU KILL HIM NOW, PLEASE?

"SO YOU FINALLY GAVE IN?"
"I HAVE TRIED TO SHOW MERCY, LOIS--
"BUT YES. I CAN'T STOP--
"--THINKING ABOUT HIM. ABOUT HOW HE MADE ME HELPLESS. IF ONLY FOR A MOMENT."
KRAK
"I CAN'T LET HIM LIVE."

AT LEAST THAT'S OVER WITH.
YOU THINK?
STOP FOR A SECOND.
THINK ABOUT WHAT YOU JUST DID.
LOIS--
SURE, HE ATTACKED YOU BECAUSE YOU FIRED HIM. BUT WHY DID YOU FIRE HIM?
BECAUSE... WELL.

THIS NEW QUEST OF YOURS, YOUR SEARCH FOR A BLACK LANTERN RING--
YOU WON'T SUCCEED IF YOU WASTE RESOURCES BY OVERREACTING LIKE THAT--
WHAT?! HOW DARE YOU--?!
MY SO FAR UTTERLY FRUITLESS QUEST!
NO. YOU'RE HERE FOR A REASON. I MUST LISTEN.
BUT I KNOW! I KNOW I'M ACTING. NOT ENTIRELY RATIONALLY.
IF ONLY YOU KNEW, LOIS.
IF ONLY YOU'D EXPERIENCED--

"--THE POWER OF WIELDING A RING."

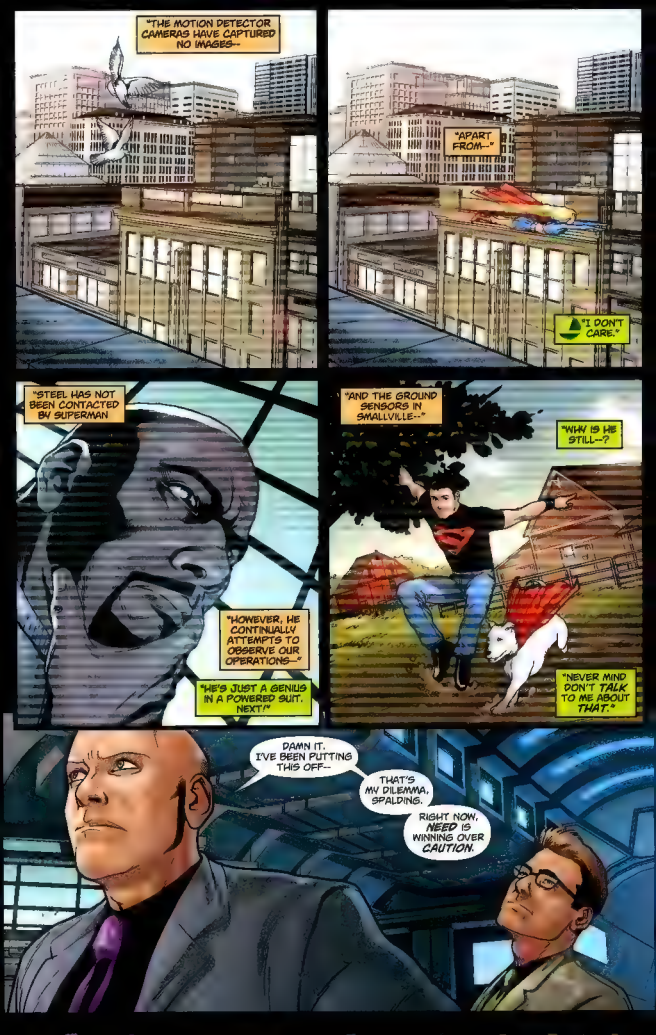
"BUT THE NEED THAT WENT WITH IT .."
THE T-TRUTH. WHAT I REALLY WANT...
IS TO BE SUPERMAN.
THE THINGS THE ORANGE RING MAKES ONE DESIRE.
RIDICULOUS
I DEMAND THEM, GUARDIAN!
I WILL HAVE THE POWER TO SAVE THE WORLD MY--
HOW WERE YOU PLANNING ON FINISHING THAT SENTENCE?
"MY WAY"? "MY POWER HAS CREATED"? "MY PEOPLE LIVE ON"?

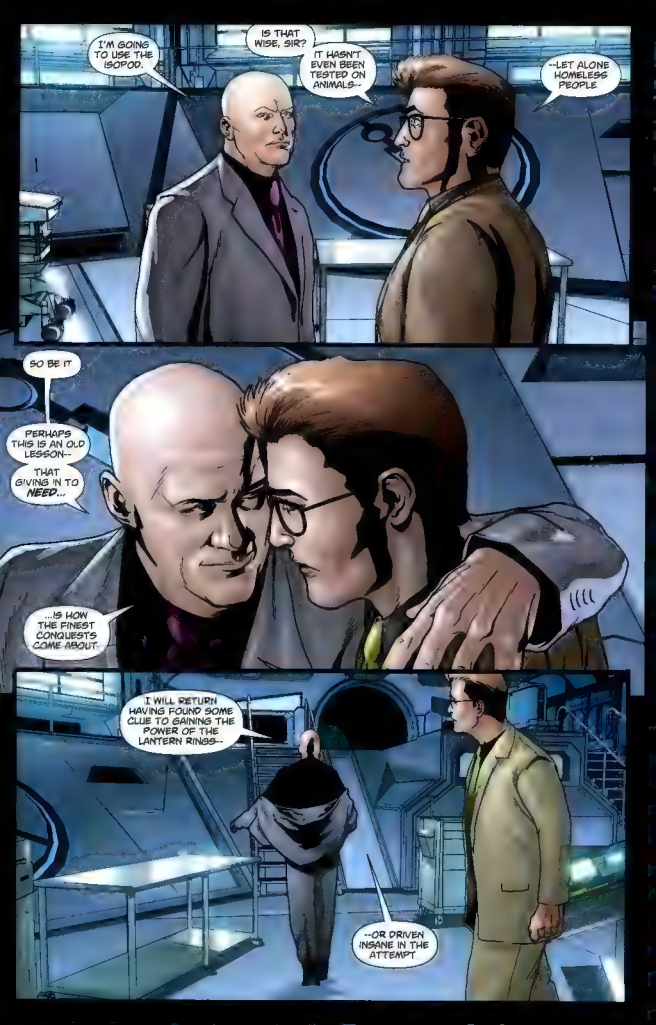
THE THIRD OF THOSE. OBVIOUSLY.
LOIS, I KNOW. THE ORANGE RING CHANGED ME.
I USED TO ENJOY DEFERRED GRATIFICATION.
YOU KNOW THAT.
BUT THE MERE MEMORY OF THE ORANGE RING MAKES ME WANT EVERYTHING NOW.
IF I HAD A LANTERN RING OF MY OWN. IF I HAD THEM ALL--
SCENARIO LOADING
I HAD THE TEAM RUN SOME HOLOGRAPHIC SIMULATIONS OF POSSIBLE OUTCOMES--

MASTER, NOW WE UNDERSTAND
YOU ARE FOR HUMANITY, AND WE WERE NOT
I THINK THIS MIGHT SATISFY MY NEED
THE, erm, JAB BOYS MAY HAVE GONE A LITTLE TOO FAR THERE.
IS THAT YOUR FATHER WITH YOU? BUT, ISN'T HE DEAD?

THE BLACK LANTERN RINGS ARE THE ODD ONES OUT, OF COURSE...
THEY JUST DISINTEGRATED
ALL THAT POWER, GONE, JUST LIKE THAT. NO, I DON'T BELIEVE IT.
THERE OUGHT TO BE TRACES.
I WANT I NEED TO FIND.. SOME PATTERN... THAT COULD LEAD ME TO THE SECRET OF THE RINGS IN GENERAL...
HEY-
MAYBE YOU SHOULD...
SLEEP ON IT?

"WHICH BRINGS US TO TODAY..."
STILL NO SIGN OF AN UNDAMAGED BLACK RING?
NO, SIR
BUT NO SIGN OF SUPERMAN EITHER?
NO, SIR
I SHOULD BILL HIM FOR THIS HOLE!
*SUPERMAN "INADVERTENTLY DAMAGED A NUMBER OF BUILDINGS IN HIS FIGHT WITH GENERAL ZOD IN WAR OF THE SUPERMEN #4- A/O Freeman #EP
SO HE'S GENUINELY GONE ON THIS JOURNEY OF HIS
DOUBTLESS TO SEEK MORE POWER.
IN THE FLYOVER STATES, ODDLY.
HOW IRONIC IF HE SHOULD RETURN TO FIND THAT I'D SAVED A GRATEFUL HUMANITY
HE'D EXPECT ME TO TAKE A FANCY NAME.
BUT UNLIKE HIM, I'D CHOOSE SOMETHING WITH A RING TO IT.
VERY DROLL, SIR. IT WAS ONCE SAID THAT PUNS ARE THE HIGHEST FORM OF WIT
EVERY NOW AND THEN, SPALDING...
...BUT NO. I'D REALIZE IF YOU WERE GENUINELY MOCKING ME.
TELL ME ABOUT THE SENSORS.


"THE MOTION DETECTOR CAMERAS HAVE CAPTURED NO IMAGES--
"APART FROM--"
"I DON'T CARE."
"STEEL HAS NOT BEEN CONTACTED BY SUPERMAN
"HOWEVER, HE CONTINUALLY ATTEMPTS TO OBSERVE OUR OPERATIONS--"
"HE'S JUST A GENIUS IN A POWERED SUIT. NEXT."
"AND THE GROUND SENSORS IN SMALLVILLE--"
"WHY IS HE STILL--?
"NEVER MIND DON'T TALK TO ME ABOUT THAT."
DAMN IT. I'VE BEEN PUTTING THIS OFF--
THAT'S MY DILEMMA, SPALDING.
RIGHT NOW, NEED IS WINNING OVER CAUTION.


I'M GOING TO USE THE ISOPOD.
IS THAT WISE, SIR?
IT HASN'T EVEN BEEN TESTED ON ANIMALS--
--LET ALONE HOMELESS PEOPLE
SO BE IT
PERHAPS THIS IS AN OLD LESSON--
THAT GIVING IN TO NEED...
...IS HOW THE FINEST CONQUESTS COME ABOUT.
I WILL RETURN HAVING FOUND SOME CLUE TO GAINING THE POWER OF THE LANTERN RINGS--
--OR DRIVEN INSANE IN THE ATTEMPT

LEXCORP INTELLIGENT LISTENING ENGINE
SUBJECT: "BLACK LANTERN RING DESTRUCTION"
ALL NEURONS ENGAGED
RETINAS PREPARED
GO.

AH!
"The rings were everywhere–"
–Daily Planet
"Rings themselves now seen to have–"
–WCBS.com
"–calling them 'Dark Quarks'–"
–Coast City Chronicle
"a paper in *Nature* suggests the new unknown force is flowing–"
–Paper submitted by Dr. Simon Kavanagh at Metropolis Institute of Technology
"A ring is just a structure–
"–swallowing its own tail."
–Starchild818 Mindswipe Forums
"–some new influence on the subatomic world–"
@benjamingoldacre
"–*Journal of Particle Physics* ponders what might have caused change in structure of universe–"
–Fourth World Science News
YES.

THIS NEW PATTERN IN THE FABRIC OF THE UNIVERSE--

IT'S BEEN FORMED BY THE DESTRUCTION OF THE BLACK LANTERN RINGS!

THE COMPUTER'S TRANSLATING IT INTO A VISUAL REPRESENTATION NOW, AN INTERDIMENSIONAL *MAP*, WHICH SHOULD--

OH.

OH, I SO *WANT* WHAT THIS MIGHT LEAD TO.

F99A

UNKNOWN

AA937

EXTRA DIMENSIONAL

SO...OKAY, COSMIC RING AROUND THE UNIVERSE, INTO OTHER DIMENSIONS EVEN--
JUST HOW DOES THAT HELP YOU GET EVEN ONE RING ON YOUR FINGER?
AND NOW I SOUND LIKE YOUR MOTHER.
LOIS--
IF I GO TO THE PLACES INDICATED, WHERE THE STRENGTH OF RESIDUAL BLACK LANTERN RING ENERGY IS STRONGEST--
IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE TO SAMPLE THAT ENERGY, WORK OUT THE SOURCE CODE OF HOW ALL THE RINGS WORK, USE IT TO CREATE MY OWN POWER RING.
WHAT YOU SEE THERE IS MY QUEST, MY NEED, MY NEW IDENTITY WAITING TO BE BORN.
I'M GOING TO FIRE UP THE POWER SUIT, AND EMBRACE MY DESTINY--
--AND YOU'RE COMING WITH ME.

YOU...sir. YOU WANT TO TAKE HER WITH YOU, SIR?
OF COURSE.
LOIS--
YES?
GO INTO SAFE MODE, PLEASE
WHA--
SQUARK!
SHE'S DOING EXACTLY AS SHE'S PROGRAMMED TO. OFFERING ME ANOTHER PERSPECTIVE, CHALLENGING ME--
EVEN SURPRISING ME.
BUT, SIR..
THE PARTS USED TO CONSTRUCT HER COME FROM BRAINIAC, FROM KRYPTONIAN TECHNOLOGY--
WE DON'T KNOW WHAT A LOT OF THEM EVEN DO.
SPALDING--

I LIKE HAVING LOIS AROUND TO GROUND ME. TO VOICE A VIEWPOINT THAT'S NOT ENTIRELY ABOUT NEED!
THAT WILL BE ESPECIALLY USEFUL WHEN I'M BECOMING A GOD IN SPACE.
IF YOUR PEOPLE OFFERED ME MORE ROBUST SUPPORT, I WOULDN'T NEED TO--
SPALDING, WHAT DOES YOUR EXPRESSION MEAN?
SIR, IF I MAY BE SO BOLD--
LOOK OUT--
--SIR!

STATEMENT: DEPLOY CAPTURE NET!
HOW DID THEY GET IN?! HOW ARE THEY NEGATING MY DEFENSES?!
SLAP
URGENT STATEMENT: STOP HIM FROM GETTING TO HIS SUIT! HE'S POWERLESS WITHOUT IT!
SLAP
HE'S WHAT?!
OF THE TEN WAYS OUT OF THIS I JUST THOUGHT OF--
LOIS, SMASH MODE!
--THIS IS BY FAR THE MOST--

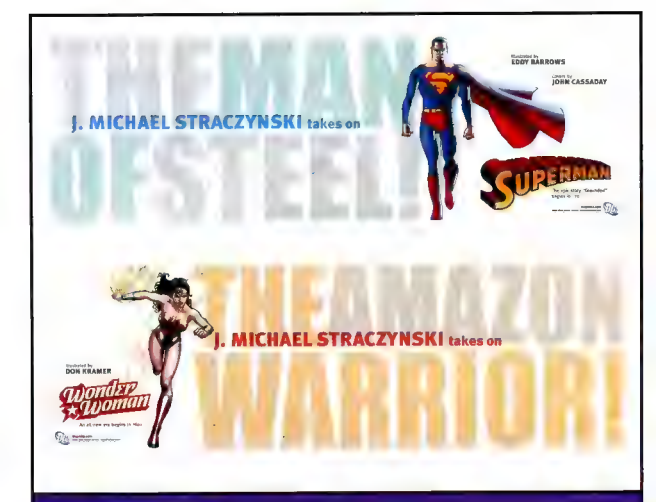
"--SATISFYING."
GRRRR!
BAMBAMBAMBAMBAM
RARGGGH!

URGENT DECISION EMERGENCY EXTRACTION!
EXCLAMATION NOW!
WHAT?! NO!
CONFIRMATION TARGET ACQUIRED.
WILL PROCEED EXACTLY AS ORDERED.

SO. YOU'RE WORKING FOR SOMEONE. WHO YOU SEEM TO BE IN MENTAL COMMUNICATION WITH.
WHO SPECIFICALLY WANTED ME HUNG UPSIDE-DOWN. SO I COULD "THINK ABOUT MY SITUATION."
INTERESTING
STATEMENT: "WORKING FOR--"!
EMOTIONAL OUTBURST: AS IF WE HAD A CHOICE!
WE'RE AS TRAPPED AS YOU ARE!
Am
SO WHEN DO I MEET THIS POWERFUL PSYCHIC?
WORRIED STATEMENT: I HOPE YOU'RE NOT ACTUALLY GOING TO MEET--
EXCLAMATION: OH.
OH NO.
PLEADING: PLEASE, NO!

PLEADING: DOES IT HAVE TO BE NOW?
PLEADING: PLEASE, DON'T MAKE ME--!
PLEADING: PLEASE--!
SCREAM.
AARGGH!
SPLAT
OH, IT WAS SO STUFFY IN THERE!
COME ALONG, WE SHOULD BE DONE BY NOW.
YOU!
OH YES, IT'S ME!

LEX LUTHOR, YOUR NEEDS DON'T MATTER NOW.
YOU ARE IN THE POWER OF--
--MISTER MIND!
NEXT: MIND: THE GAP.



WELL? WHAT DID YOU THINK?

I'm assuming that by now you've had a chance to check out our stellar anniversary issues SUPERMAN #700, BATMAN #700 and WONDER WOMAN #600. These are pretty impressive milestones for a series to hit... other oft, it's not like you can just step on issue number like that on a title and act like you'd earned it (that would be silly). Our editors and talent put a lot of hard work into making these books something special, and perhaps the most gratifying part is that they lived on exciting new era for some of our biggest characters. Case in point — I'd like to use this space to once again formally welcome J. Michael Straczynski as the regular writer on Superman and Wonder Woman. In just a few weeks his first regular issues of both series (Wonder Woman #601 and Superman #701) will hit the stands and you will finally know what we've known for months — they freaking rule. Seriously, JMS has plans for Wonder Woman and Superman that will have you eagerly awaiting each new issue. If the anniversary issues weren't enough of a clue what he has in store for you, I urge you to check out recent issues of his THE BRAVE AND THE BOLD run. Pay special attention to issue #33 guest - starring Wonder Woman because it may be one of the best single comics you will read all year. Now imagine that goodness spread across two monthly titles and you get some idea of where we're going with all of this. So please join me in giving a big DC Nation welcome to JMS and enjoy the announcement.

Be seeing you,

- Ian Sattler, Senior Story Editor DCU

DC NATION

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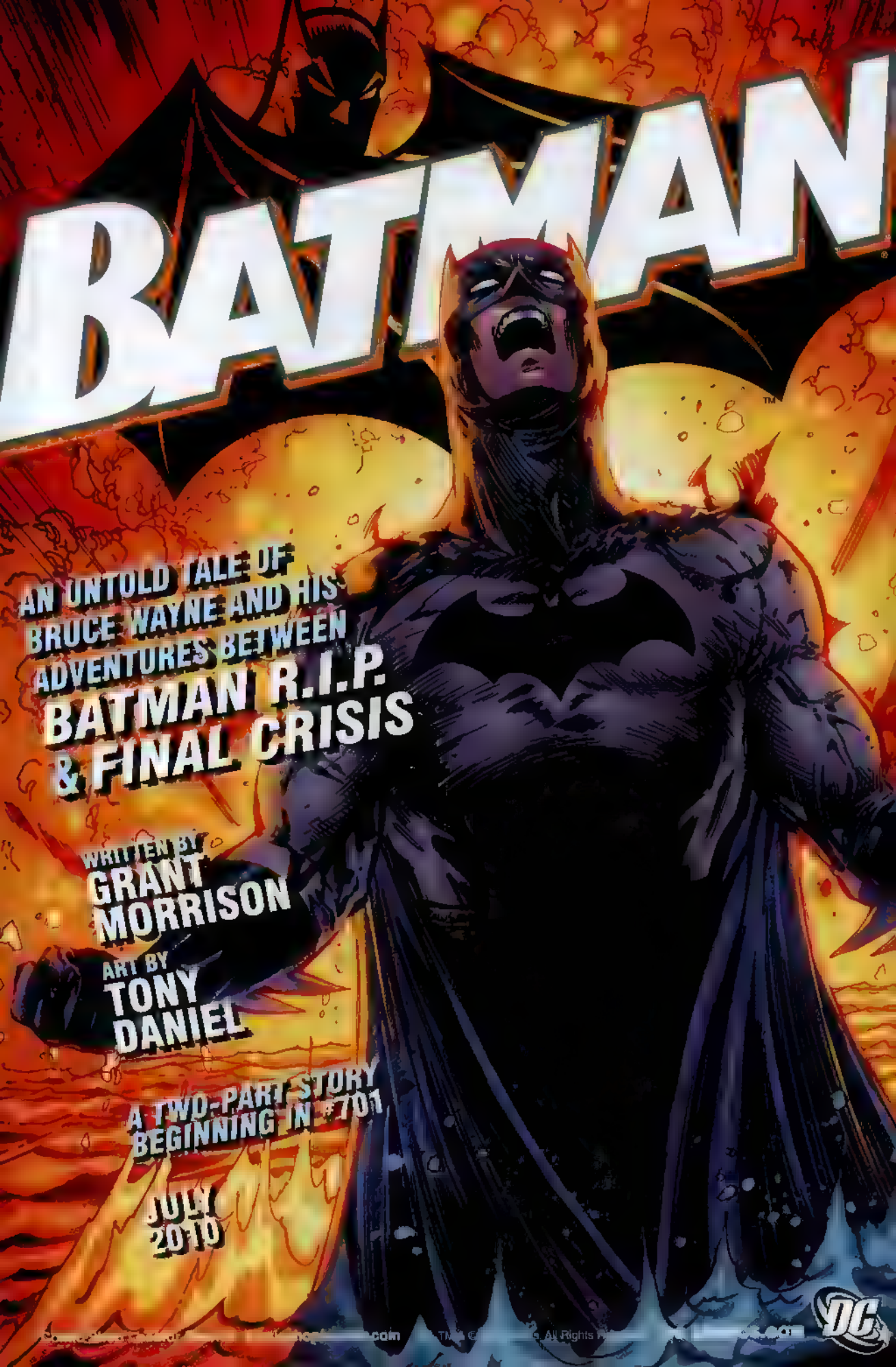
BATMAN
AN UNTOLD TALE OF BRUCE WAYNE AND HIS ADVENTURES BETWEEN
BATMAN R.I.P. & FINAL CRISIS
WRITTEN BY
GRANT MORRISON
ART BY
TONY DANIEL
A TWO-PART STORY BEGINNING IN #701
JULY 2010
DC

JADE IS BACK! BUT IS HER RETURN A BLESSING OR A CURSE?

BRIGHTEST DAY

JUSTICE LEAGUE of AMERICA #46

JUSTICE SOCIETY of AMERICA #41

A 5-PART CROSSOVER EVENT

WRITTEN BY JAMES ROBINSON | ART BY MARK BAGLEY

BEGINNING

JUNE 2010

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GRANT MORRISON

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They call him charming... *BeastCharming.*